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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the Boston Workplace Education Collaborative (BWEC) was conducted during 1989. The BWEC is a partnership among Roxbury Community College, the Boston Private Industry Council, and the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) of Massachusetts to provide workplace literacy educational opportunities to adult workers. Methods used in the evaluation included personal interviews with a sampling of staff, students, union, and employer representatives; a comprehensive review of key documents; and observation of meetings of the project's advisory committee. Among the findings were the following: (1) BWEC was highly successful in developing and delivering educational services in an efficient, timely, and effective manner; (2) a high level of demand for classes and very consistent attendance were found; (3) employers were satisfied with the effect on employee performance and especially self-esteem; and (4) there was a high level of student satisfaction with instructors, class locations, the hours of the classes, and what they are learning. Areas identified for improvement were provision of more English-as-a-Second-Language classes; more relationship between the curriculum and the jobs of the students; smaller classes; ability grouping for classes; lengthening the classes from 15 weeks to at least 1 year; provision of counseling for students; and more feedback to employers about the progress of their employees. (CML)

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BOSTON WORKPLACE EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION

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Planning, Management Consulting, and Training Services for Nonprofit and Public Organizations

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION:

BOSTON WORKPLACE EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM

Prepared by: Mark L. Levine and Eleanor Pansar
Levine Associates

January, 1990

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Summative Evaluation of the Boston Workplace Education Collaborative Program

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the Boston Workplace Education Collaborative (BWEC) conducted by the consulting firm of Levine Associates during 1989. This evaluation examines BWEC's activities under its grant from the Workplace Literacy Partnership Grants Program of the U.S. Department of Education, for Fiscal Year 1988.

The grant period began in October, 1988, and was to have ended December 31, 1989. A three month extension was granted. The first three months of the grant period were defined as a "start-up period," and the remaining twelve months were the service delivery period. The grant period was extended for three months in order to maintain operations in anticipation of continued funding.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Each goal and objective as stated in the original proposal to the U.S. Department of Education, and subsequently modified, will be compared to the actual outcome achieved by BWEC during the demonstration period.

The methodology used by Levine Associates in gathering information for the evaluation consisted of:

* personal interviews with a sampling of staff, students, union and employer representatives;
* a comprehensive review of key documents;
* observation of meetings of the Advisory Committee.

The evaluator's observations for each objective are followed by conclusions and recommendations to improve the effectiveness of future program activities.

III. BACKGROUND OF THE BOSTON WORKPLACE EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

A. History

The Boston Workplace Education Collaborative (BWEC) is a partnership among Roxbury Community College (RCC), the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), and the AFL-CIO of Massachusetts. The partnership was created in 1988 to develop a system in the Greater Boston area for the provision of workplace literacy educational opportunities to the many adult workers who have inadequate basic educational and English language skills and who, as a result, are unable to perform their jobs to maximum effectiveness and are unable to take advantage of opportunities for advancement.

Under the agreement among the partners, the PIC identifies companies interested in participating in the program, while the AFL-CIO identifies union members needing workplace educational services. RCC delivers the educational services and serves as the fiscal agent for grant funding.

The BWEC Advisory Committee was designed to give the partners the opportunity to advise on a wide range of issues, including policy formulation, through participation in the BWEC Advisory Committee. The Committee also includes representatives from participating unions and employers.

The intent of the partners in joining forces was not simply to secure demonstration grant funding but to build a comprehensive workplace literacy system in Greater Boston which provides Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) opportunities and links the worker-student, through RCC, to available skills training and post-secondary educational opportunities at RCC and elsewhere.

The services provided by this system are designed to assist individual workers become more productive and improve their qualifications for advancement. The program is intended to assist employers by increasing the pool of workers with sound basic educational skills and the pool of qualified applicants for available positions requiring higher level educational skills.

During the three years prior to the grant application, RCC had identified workplace literacy as a programmatic priority. It had established the college as a leader in the field of community-based adult literacy with the opening of the Adult Literacy Resource Center. The Center, a joint effort of RCC and the University of Massachusetts Boston, serves as the technical assistance center for the City of Boston's Adult Literacy Initiative and is seen as a national model in linking higher education resources and community-based adult literacy.

RCC has worked with unions, employers, and state and local government in developing and implementing programs for dislocated workers. Success in several workplace literacy projects encouraged RCC to expand these efforts through the Workplace Literacy Partnership Grants Program.

After the grant was received, start-up activities began in October, 1988. After a three month start-up period, staffing was complete and classes began. Many classes began on schedule, in January, 1989, and by the middle of February, 9 out of 12 classes had begun.

B. The Project's Schedule of Classes

BWEC delivers services to students in 12 classes at eight sites.

The policy of BWEC is to limit class enrollments to 20 students. Each class is held twice a week for two to three hours each day. There are 8 English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and 4 Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes.

Chart of BWEC classes and enrollees

Class Location	Type of Class	Start Date	# Enrollees Start	End
Local 66/RCC	ESL	1/23	16	16
Local 66 St.Patrick's Church	ESL, Beg.	1/23	17	17
Brigham & Women's Hospital	ABE, Beg.	2/14	12	17
Brigham & Women's Hospital	ABE, GED prep.	2/14	20	18
Local 26	ABE, Beg.	2/16	18	9
New England Medical Center	ABE, Adv.	5/16	18	6
Local 26	ESL, Beg.	1/23	20	20
Local 26	ESL, Int.	1/23	20	20
Westin Hotel	ESL	7/06	21	21
International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)	ESL,Int.	1/19	25	25
ILGWU	ESL, Beg.	1/19	20	20
Shattuck Hospital	ESL,multi	9/23	18	17
TOTAL	8 sites	8 ESL,4 ABE		225	206

Total Persons Served by BWEC by quarters:				
1st qtr.	2nd qtr.	3rd qtr.	4th qtr.	Total
187	32	70	25	314

A total of 225 students were enrolled in classes during the grant period. A total of 314 workers were assessed, counseled, instructed, or referred elsewhere.

IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Overview

BWEC's goals during the first year of operation under the demonstration grant were twofold. The first goal of the project was to create the workplace literacy system. This involved establishing formal relationships among the partners; clarifying roles and responsibilities; developing job descriptions; hiring teaching and administrative staff; creating the record keeping system and procedures to implement and monitor the delivery of services; and working to develop resources to continue and expand the activities begun under the grant.

The second goal was to deliver effective educational services to worker/students for a full twelve months. This involved recruiting and enrolling students, developing assessment tools, developing curricula for both ESL and ABE, and developing tools to monitor student progress.

B. Format of Sections V. and VI.

The format of the next two sections, one for each of the two goals, is as follows. First, each objective is examined in view of appropriate evidence. Then follows a statement of general conclusions regarding the goal. Finally, specific recommendations to improve the program vis a vis that goal are stated.

V. Goal 1. To establish a workplace literacy and basic education system for Greater Boston with active participation from the business, labor, and education sectors.

A. Objective 1.1. To form a Steering Committee, involving RCC, the Boston PIC, the Mass. AFL-CIO Education Committee, participating unions, and participating employers.

Evidence: This was accomplished and the Committee held its first meeting in February, 1989. The Steering Committee, formally known as the Advisory Committee, is chaired by the Director of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute at RCC and includes:

* the Dean of Institutional Advancement at RCC;
* the Associate Director of the Boston Private Industry Council;
* the Director of Education for the AFL-CIO Laundry and Dry Cleaning International Union, Local 66;
* the Education Coordinator from the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 26;

* the Education Director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union;
* the Assistant Director of Human Resources from the Westin Hotel;
* the Manager of Training and Organizational Development of the New England Medical Center;
* the Director of Education from the Brigham and Women's Hospital;
* an Educational Specialist from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor;
* the Director of the Partnership Office of the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training;
* the Academic Program Officer from the Massachusetts Board of Regents.

B. Objective 1.2. To assist the Steering Committee to become a working policy-making and oversight body for the Collaborative.

Evidence: The Steering Committee, known as the Advisory Committee, has met on a regular basis. Minutes indicate that the functions of the Committee are to advise the partners and to advocate for the program with both current and potential supporters. Its primary purpose during the grant year has been public relations, rather than policy making. Policy during the first year has been guided by the goals and objectives presented in the original proposal to the Department of Education. The Advisory Committee has served as a communications forum in which information is shared and issues related to program objectives are discussed. The Committee is also involved in planning and carrying out public relations activities with other employers, in networking, and in raising funds for the continuation of the Collaborative.

C. Objective 1.3. To effectively and efficiently complete the start-up activities required to operate the demonstration program, including:

a) hiring and training staff;
b) designing worker assessment;
c) designing record keeping procedures;
d) gathering and developing curriculum materials;
e) developing detailed working agreements and schedules with union locals and employers;
f) recruiting program participants.

Evidence: Successfully completing these activities, largely during the start-up period, is a major accomplishment of the BWEC program. Operating procedures and program staff were all in place prior to the start of classes. Working agreements and curricula were begun during the first months of the program and continued to be developed throughout the course of the year. Evidence specific to each of these activities follows.

a) **Hiring and training staff**

Evidence: High quality administrative and instructional staff were hired and trained prior to the beginning of classes.

The Program Director was hired by September, 1988. The ESL Team Leader was hired in October and the ABE team leader was hired in November. The Administrative Assistant began in December, 1988. The 6 part-time Instructors and the Education Counselor were hired and began working in January, 1989.

The staff is very well qualified in terms of workplace education experience and academic background, emphasizes the quality of its teaching, and is culturally diverse, reflecting the makeup of the student population.

While efforts to diversify the staff ethnically and linguistically have been successful, only one Instructor is male, reflecting the make-up of the teaching profession rather than the make-up of the student population.

When the original Education Counselor resigned in June, 1989, she was replaced on by a part-time counselor within a month. This reduction in hours was requested by the Project Director and was approved by the grant making agency, the Department of Education.

One part-time ABE Instructor resigned during the first cycle. Her workload was re-assessed and an additional ESL class, deemed more necessary than ABE, was begun using a BWEC ESL teacher.

All staff attended a one day orientation on Saturday, January 21, 1989, entitled "Building a Team." Topics and activities included the history, structure, and mission of BWEC; workplace education as a concept in this specific situation; small group work sessions on curriculum development; and an overview of materials and instructional collaboration. Information and record-keeping requirements were presented to all staff at the orientation.

Staff also attended several workshops on curriculum development, discussed below in section d) Curriculum Materials.

b) **Designing worker assessments**

Evidence: Student-worker assessments were designed or adapted for both ESL and ABE skills prior to the service delivery period.

The ESL assessment is "The John Test," a standardized oral

placement test for non-native speakers of English which was originally developed by ESL teachers at the City University of New York.

The ABE assessment includes several instruments:

* "A Skills Check," developed by the BWEC teachers at Roxbury Community College, evaluates math, reading and writing skills;
* The Adult Informal Reading Test (Form A) with six reading tests, developed by the University of Missouri;
* The Adult Informal Reading Test (Form B) with six reading tests, developed by the University of Missouri;
* Several word recognition tests lists, developed by the University of Missouri.

c) Record keeping procedures

Evidence: Record-keeping procedures were developed for the intake and assessment processes; the Individual Educational Plan; and the central files, including: the master list of statistical information, the referral forms for termination, child care, etc., attendance forms, termination forms, and monthly reports.

As is common among new programs, BWEC had some start-up difficulties. Although their job description included developing and maintaining student records, and instructions were given at the staff orientation, some Instructors felt that administrative requirements were not made clear to them in a timely fashion, nor were they given direction on how to respond to such requirements. As a result, they were unable to gather and report required information when requested by the Project Director. For that reason some student folders remain incomplete at this time.

In addition, a number of records and statistical reports were lost early on in the program and had to be reconstructed later by the Instructors. Even by November, not all data had been restored.

d) Curriculum materials

Evidence: Curriculum materials were both developed by BWEC staff and adapted from other sources, including employers. Instructors share certain curriculum items such as the Oxford Picture Dictionary. In addition, individual Instructors designed materials of specific interest to their classes. This process allowed each Instructor the flexibility to be creative and to respond to the needs of their students.

Several curriculum development workshops were held for all Instructors by a consultant in workplace education curriculum with the assistance of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute.

Curriculum was developed throughout the course of the year, in an attempt to be sensitive to the needs of the students at each site, since each site was unique in many characteristics.

The curricula have been organized by each Instructor in looseleaf binders presenting a useful and well organized format which makes them available for future use. Copies will be made and distributed to each site.

In spite of all this activity, staff expressed some uneasiness that the program lacked internal coherence since materials were independently developed. There was a general sense of isolation and fragmentation: they expressed a need for more centralized development of the curriculum.

e) **Development of working agreements with union locals and employers**

Evidence: Working agreements and schedules were developed with seven union locals or employers: the Westin Hotel; Brigham and Women's Hospital; Local 26, the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union; the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union; Local 66, Dry Cleaning and Laundry workers' Union; the New England Medical Center; and the Shattuck Hospital.

Working agreements were developed for each site. Four were concluded in January and February of 1989, one was developed in May, 1989, one in July, 1989, and one in September, 1989.

f) **Recruiting program participants**

Evidence: Program participants were recruited by employers and union representatives. Introduced by employer or unions representatives, the Instructors presented the program to workers and conducted an initial assessment to determine who was eligible for the classes. 309 persons were evaluated for the program. 225 students enrolled in classes.

D. **Objective 1.4.** To develop the necessary agreements among the Collaborative members and others, and complete the financial planning required to continue the BWEC as a workplace literacy and basic education system for Greater Boston.

Evidence: This objective has been largely accomplished. Agreements were developed among the partners to continue to provide services and BWEC classes will be continuing at 5 sites.

In a significant development, 4 employers and one union have assumed increased responsibility for the program at their site. These employers have become known as "Affiliates." They have assumed the costs of the program and are contracting with BWEC for specific services, such as instruction, curriculum development, and/or administration services. These include the Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Local 26 (who have contracted with BWEC for instructional and program management services); the New England Medical Center; the Westin Hotel; and the Shattuck Hospital.

Near the end of the first year of the project, BWEC was negotiating agreements with employers and unions for classes at Boston City Hospital and the Shawmut Bank.

By the end of the first year, no comprehensive funding mechanism has been identified to continue to support BWEC. Since several classes are becoming institutionalized at the workplace and employers are contributing release time to their employees and purchasing services from BWEC, the chances of this objective being accomplished seem very high. As a result, BWEC has applied for a second year of funding from the U.S. Department of Education to continue the program and gain more time to promote and establish a larger system of workplace education.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, enormous progress has been made towards achieving the first Goal of the project: **To establish a workplace literacy and basic education system for Greater Boston with active participation from the business, labor, and education sectors.**

The intent of the grant was achieved: a system for workplace literacy has been created and the partners have been active and creative. Unions, employers, and Roxbury Community College established relationships, jointly defined student needs, and have worked together to contribute a variety of resources to the establishment and success of the project. These resources included time, classroom space, on the job coverage, and money. The contributions specific to each site are detailed in each working agreement.

Of course, there remain several areas in which there is room for improvement:

1. **Partnership**

There is strong interest in the concept of workplace education among unions and employers in the Greater Boston area. As a result, much collaboration has taken place among the identified partners of the project and many workers are learning new skills through the program.

However, there is a great need for the partners, especially individuals below the level of the Advisory Committee, to share with each other the full extent of their interest in and concern for the success of the program and the students.

All members of the Collaborative should work more aggressively and creatively to foster the concepts of "partnership" and "collaboration." Communication among the partners, at the level of floor supervisors, Instructors, and unions representatives, needs to be supported and expanded. In particular, BWEC must clarify responsibilities, organizational relationships, lines of accountability, and accomplishments in the areas of:

* recruitment of students;
* screening, evaluation, and placement of students in classes;
* keeping records.

Without each participant understanding how much work all the other participants are actually contributing to the program, the potential for resentments and misunderstanding is real.

2. **Curriculum Development**

Employers, unions, and educators have been very active in the development and implementation of the BWEC program. Employers and the union representatives who were interviewed stated that they wanted to be more involved, especially in the development of the curriculum.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BWEC: GOAL 1:

In this section are presented specific recommendations to improve BWEC's ability to achieve its objectives.

Objective 1.3. To effectively and efficiently complete the start up activities required to operate the demonstration program, including:

a) Hiring and training staff

Recommendation: Recruit more men as Instructors. There is only one male Instructor and he is leaving at the end of the grant period. In many classes, there are many male students.

We recognize the field of education is dominated by women, but feel that efforts should be made to recruit more men to achieve more of a balance.

b) Designing worker assessment

Recommendation: Student assessments should be more closely related to their job requirements. The education counselor, the Instructor, and the employee, in collaboration with the employee's supervisor, should determine whether a student needs to focus more on reading, writing, speaking, or math, on the basis of the requirements of their jobs, and then incorporate that judgement into the student's IEP.

c) Designing record keeping procedures

Recommendation: The student records are incomplete. All efforts should be made to assist Instructors to provide complete demographic information on each student. The education counselor should provide what ever assistance is required to the Instructors to obtain that information. The Project Director should review the records quarterly to ensure they are complete.

d) Gathering and developing curriculum materials

Recommendation: It has been reported that some teachers who are excellent in a classroom may not be as talented developing curriculum. In the second year of operation, therefore, curriculum development should be coordinated more rigorously by the ABE and ESL team leaders.

VI. Goal 2. To provide high quality direct literacy and basic educational services for 12 months to demonstrate the effectiveness of the BWEC as a workplace literacy and basic education system for Greater Boston.

A. Objective 2.1. Conduct an individualized assessment of each worker's education skills.

Evidence: Individualized assessments have been completed for at least 92% of the students who are enrolled. This is based on an examination of a sample of 25% of student information folders.

English language skills are assessed by the John test.

For those students applying for ABE classes, reading, writing and math skills are assessed using the ABE interview, the Basic Skills Check, and the word tests, copies of which are found in individual student folders. BWEC developed a written pre-test instrument which includes a reading, grammar, and writing skills check. With the assistance of

the ABE team, the Brigham and Women's Hospital developed their own ABE test which stresses math and is specific to workers' job requirements.

B. **Objective 2.2.** Provide educational counseling to each worker resulting in the development of an Individualized Educational Plan aimed at the achievement of the worker's career goal.

Evidence: Because this is a very important aspect of the BWEC program, a lengthy discussion follows.

This objective was largely accomplished. 81% of student information folders contain Individual Educational Plans.

Based on interviews with Instructors and students, we believe the 81% figure is an inaccurate reflection of the actual number of IEP's that were devised. Rather, this low percentage reflects an administrative problem that occurred during the first months of the service delivery period.

During the tenure of the original Education Counselor, some of the original IEP's were lost and the Instructors later had to reconstruct them. As a result, some IEP's are missing, and the quality of those that are in the folders, we believe, do not reflect the depth of the original IEP's. They do not consistently include, as was intended in the original proposal, "information on the worker's educational history, any pertinent learning disabilities, test results, including the worker's reading ability in his/her native language, educational program goals and objectives, and career interest information."

For example, one student's folder includes the goal of "learning English," whereas a personal interview revealed a very specific career move as his goal. His goal is so specific that he rejected a job promotion because it was not leading towards his goal.

The positive result of having the teachers assess and counsel each worker to develop their IEP was that the Instructor developed stronger relationships with the student, and learned a great deal about each individual and their education goals and needs.

The negative result was that the Instructors resented having to recreate IEP's.

This raises the question of the appropriate role of the Education Counselor, part of which was "to conduct educational assessments and counseling with each worker leading to the development of an Individual Education Plan." She was to then meet with each worker periodically to monitor his/her progress towards achieving his/her goals.

It may be more appropriate for the Instructors to do this. A more appropriate role for the Education Counselor might be to counsel the Instructors about the educational resources available to the students. Although translators were available to the Education Counselor at all times she needed to speak with students, language barriers, especially among the Asian students, make it difficult for the English/Spanish Bilingual Counselor to communicate with many of the students directly.

The second Education Counselor now defines her role "to provide information about BWEC classes and other services offered by Roxbury Community College." In addition, she performs other administrative tasks such as maintaining attendance records, compiling statistics for the Project Director, and overseeing the maintenance of student IEP's and files. The record-keeping system has improved a great deal during her tenure.

Her job is structured to permit a flexible schedule of hours, enabling her to provide counseling services to students.

It may be appropriate for her to focus more of her time on another aspect of her job description: "working closely with collaborating institutions on educational issues." This could include coordinating the counseling activities among the employers, unions, and Instructors.

C. Objective 2.3. Develop curriculum materials for each class that emphasize the relationship between the skills that are taught and the literacy requirements of actual jobs.

Evidence: This was largely accomplished. Curriculum materials were developed with job-related literacy in mind. For example, restaurant workers were taught vocabulary relating to food, meals, service, etc. Hospital workers were taught words relating to parts of the body, the medical profession, etc.

On the other hand, applications of English language skills in writing and speaking were not consistently tailored to specific job needs, such as the writing of specific reports in specific formats, for example. Much of the curriculum is general and related to daily living. Employer supervisors felt that this was a shortcoming of the program. They observed a direct relationship between the job relatedness of the curriculum and the increased self confidence of the student/worker. They felt workers would benefit much more if there were more class work related specifically to job-related requirements. In some cases, however, program staff reported difficulty obtaining that information from employers.

D. **Objective 2.4:** Provide 6 classes to 20 workers per class in Basic Education.

Evidence: This original objective was accomplished only partially because the focus of the program changed after student assessments and classroom performance indicated a greater need for ESL than for ABE. In April, 1989, the Project Director requested a budget change that shifted funds from Basic Education to ESL. This request, while not formally amending the objective, was approved lby lthe Department of Education. As a result, two classes were held with a total enrollment of 35 students. (17 students at Brigham and Women's Hospital; 18 students at New England Medical Center)

E. **Objective 2.5.** Provide 6 classes to 20 workers per class in Advanced Basic Education.

Evidence: This original objective was partially accomplished for the same reasons given for Objective 2.5. Two classes were held with a total enrollment of 38 students. (20 students enrolled at Brigham and Women's Hospital; 18 students enrolled at Local 26.)

F. **Objective 2.6.** Provide 6 classes to 20 workers per class in several levels of ESL.

Evidence: This objective was completely accomplished. 7 classes were held with a total enrollment of 157 students (20 students were enrolled at one Local 26 class and 20 were enrolled at another Local 26 class; 25 were enrolled at one class at the ILGWU and 20 were enrolled at another class at the ILGWU; 16 were enrolled at a class at RCC; 17 were enrolled at a class at St. Patrick's church; and 18 students were enrolled at the Shattuck Hospital).

G. **Objective 2.7.** Provide 288 contact hours of educational services to each student.

Evidence: 75% of the classes provide 94% or more of the desired number of contact hours, with 50% providing 100%. Because some classes were added after the start of the service delivery period (one class began in May, one in July, and one in September) they do not meet the 288 contact hour goal. Their format is the same as those classes which have been held throughout the full year, meeting twice a week for 2 hours per class.

H. **Objective 2.8. (as amended)**

a. At least 50% of the students will indicate that they have attained, or expect to attain, at least 80% of their defined learning goals within the time frame of the program; an additional 25% of the students will indicate that they expect to attain at least

80% of their defined learning goals but may need more time than is allowed in this demonstration program to accomplish this.

b. The BWEC will develop and refine a testing instrument for measuring student progress in the ABE portion of the program.

c. To track and report on student advancement to the next highest level (where this is offered at the worksite).

Evidence :

a) Evidence to support the achievement of this objective is anecdotal and general. There is no quantitative instrument to measure the degree to which the stated student goals were achieved. The learning goals may be defined as the goals stated in the IEP, which, without exception, are "to learn to read, speak, and write English," or may be considered the academic goals defined by the Instructors at the beginning of class cycles. These goals are very specific and include such things as "possessive pronouns," "adverbs, and adjectives," etc.

81% of student folders contain photocopied checklists of such academic goals. Their reliability is open to question since the list of goals and their achievement are photocopied, lacking individualization.

Only 23% of the folders contained competencies.

A review of attendance records, however, suggests that students believe that they are achieving this objective since attendance is consistently high. In addition students reported in their interviews that they felt they were making good progress. They were highly enthusiastic about the classes.

b) BWEC has developed a testing instrument for measuring student progress in the ABE portion of the program.

c) Several student folders contain letters of achievement indicating they have completed their classes and are eligible to advance to the next level. Additionally, students themselves report that they have moved from one level of a class to another.

For the most part, however, students are at very low levels of English and Basic Skills competence and rather than go on to higher levels, they need to spend longer periods of time at current levels of instruction.

I. **Objective 2.9.** Conduct an evaluation of the program and disseminate the results to the members of the collaborative.

Evidence: This was accomplished. The evaluation has been conducted. Interviews were held with students, staff, and employer and union representatives. Key documents were reviewed. The evaluation will be shared with the members of the collaborative including the partners and the sites.

J. **Objective 2.10.** Refer a high proportion of workers to further education or training programs upon successful completion of the educational services available under the demonstration project.

Evidence: Interviews with Instructors, employers and students indicate they are greatly interested in workplace education. During this demonstration year, many students have progressed from one cycle to the next. Four students have enrolled in RCC's GED program. One other student has already received his GED certificate.

However, a striking phenomenon has been observed: some students are attending several literacy and skills classes during the week on their own initiative, including BWEC and other literacy programs. Local 26, for example, has a well integrated series of classes held at the University of Massachusetts Boston and the union hall, which combines BWEC instruction in grammar with reading and writing classes sponsored by the union.

K. **Conclusions**

The following conclusions have been reached about the accomplishment of **Goal 2: To provide high quality direct literacy and basic educational services for 12 months to demonstrate the effectiveness of the BWEC as a workplace literacy and basic education system for Greater Boston.**

BWEC has been highly successful in developing and delivering educational services in an efficient, timely and effective manner. A high level of demand for classes and very consistent attendance attest to its success. Employers report they are very satisfied with its effect on employee performance and especially self-esteem. Students report a high level of satisfaction with the Instructors, the locations of the classes, the hours of the classes, and what they are learning. In fact, several students are taking more than one class.

However, there are several areas that could be improved.

1. Type of Class

More English as a Second Language classes are needed.

2. Job-Relatedness of the Curriculum

Union representatives, Instructors, and floor supervisors agree that the curriculum is not specifically designed to address the workers' job-related requirements. This does not dismay all of them, however, because each of these partners has different goals for the program. Instructors want students to achieve competencies. Unions seek a general improvement in workers' quality of life. Employers want more self-confident and capable employees who are able to accomplish specific job-related tasks.

3. Class size

There is a wide consensus that classes are too large. Instructors and union representatives both feel that twenty students per class does not enable the Instructors to give students the level of individual attention they require.

4. Class composition

Classes include students of varying ability, making it difficult to teach. In written reports and in interviews, Instructors stressed the difficulty of mixing students of differing abilities in one class.

5. Length of class cycle

Cycles of 15 weeks are considered too short. Union representatives and Instructors felt that cycles should be at least one year.

6. Need for more counseling

Able students have dropped out of the program due to lack of confidence in their abilities. It is highly likely that some of them could have been retained had there been a counseling and support effort involving the Instructor, Counselor, and employer supervisor. This lack of communication among the partners and the unmet need for more counseling is a potentially serious threat to student success.

Employers want more feedback about the progress of their employees, since they and the students' co-workers willingly provide coverage while the student attends classes. They want to contribute more actively to their workers' progress.

L. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOAL 2:

In this section, recommendations are made to improve the program's effectiveness in achieving Goal 2.

1. **Objective 2.2** Provide educational counseling to each worker resulting in the development of an individualized educational plan aimed at the achievement of the worker's career goal.

Recommendation: Although students seem comfortable with the academic counseling that their Instructors are providing, it has come to our attention during this evaluation that educational counseling to prevent dropouts and to provide encouragement is not being addressed. We consider this a major issue which must be addressed.

Currently the position of Education counselor is a part time position, with working hours scheduled to be flexible. However, much of her time is spent on administrative tasks.

We recommend that BWEC consider a more aggressive and creative approach to delivering counseling services to students. The counselor should keep more evening hours and should establish a formal rotation among the different classes during each cycle.

In addition, more collaborative counseling is needed to keep students from dropping out because of fear of failure, low self-esteem, etc. Employer floor supervisors have indicated their interest in being more involved in the counseling process since they want and need their workers to succeed in this endeavor.

The Education Counselor should coordinate meetings including Instructors, supervisors, and union representatives at the beginning of each class cycle to help them develop stronger working relationships and to share information about their students and their goals for those students with each other. She should coordinate mid-cycle meetings, as well, and facilitate, whenever necessary, ad hoc communications regarding student difficulties.

2. **Objective 2.3** Develop curriculum materials for each class that emphasize the relationship between the skills that are taught and the literacy requirements of actual jobs.

Recommendation: Since employer floor supervisors and union representatives are very invested in workplace education, they should be involved much more in curriculum development. The BWEC ABE and/or ESL Team Leaders, with the help of the Director of BWEC, should actively solicit their input and make every effort to ensure that their job-related or membership-related needs are met. Their thoughtful ideas

will strengthen employee career success. Wherever possible, job-related tasks should be integrated into the classroom exercises.

3. **Objective 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 Regarding the number of classes, students, and types of courses.**

Recommendation: Continue to expand the number of ESL classes.

Recommendation: Reduce the class size to fifteen students.

Recommendation: Apply the assessment tools that have been developed much more carefully and assign students to classes with others of the same level of ability.

Recommendation: Develop courses that last between 9 and 12 months.

Recommendation: Continue to encourage the development of complementary education programs by employers and unions, and provide much more counseling to students.